



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

December 22, 2004

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details. **Have a safe and wonderful Holiday season!**

Report Calls Higher Ed Critical to Economic Future

The Lieutenant Governor's Commission on Higher Education and Economic Development concluded in its final report that higher education in Michigan must become a necessity, not an option, for future economic success. The panel issued numerous recommendations on how to double the number of students graduating from Michigan's public universities and community colleges.

The panel, created by Governor Jennifer Granholm, found that the transformation of the nation's economy demanded a highly educated workforce and Michigan lags behind other states in its graduation rates.

For example, the panel cited statistics that revealed that only 22 percent of Michigan's adults over the age of 25 have a baccalaureate or higher, below the national average of 24 percent. The leading state, Massachusetts, has 33 percent of adults over the age of 25 with a bachelor's degree or higher.

The commission also found that states with higher college graduation rates have a higher income per capita and a lower unemployment rate than states with lower graduation rates. With the state struggling thru tough economic times, one of the ways to compete in the global economy is to improve the education of our workforce.

The commission recommended that the state guarantee "universal higher education" and work to change people's expectations that graduating with a college degree is the norm, as opposed to settling with a high school diploma. The committee also recommends the creation of a more rigorous high school curriculum that is better suited to prepare students for post-secondary secondary education and to replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test with a college admissions test such as the ACT. Lastly, the report also recommends an expansion of dual-enrollment programs so that students can earn college credits while still in high school.

The final commission report also called for:

- Michigan's public universities and community colleges to do a better job at helping students complete their degree.
- Making it easier to transfer credits to a different higher education institution by creating a website that contains course articulation and transfer information, including what courses are accepted and where.
- Increased effort to bring back workers who have earned some college credits in the past to complete their degrees.
- Conduct an analysis of current building capacity and staffing at Michigan's higher education institutions to prepare for a larger enrollment
- More commercialization of university research to create spin-off jobs.

These are just a small sample of the many recommendations that were offered by the commission. Universities and community colleges are already working on some of these recommendations. Other recommendations included in the report require a reevaluation of the state's priorities and services that are provided. Governor Granholm said that she will provide more details on some of the recommendations of the report during her State of the State address and budget proposal early next year.

Funding for higher education in Michigan has become difficult in recent years due to the financial difficulties that the state has experienced. The Legislature has cut about \$220 million over the past four years but was able to restore some of the funding that was previously cut during the current fiscal year.

Log on to the commission's website, www.cherrycommission.org, to review the entire report.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Every other Tuesday at 6:05 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

Jan. 10
7-9 p.m.

Location: Sterling Heights Public Library
(40255 Dodge Park)

Jan. 31
7-9 p.m.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(40900 Romeo Plank Road, south of Canal)

Contact My Office

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